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T W O S E R M O N S

Preach'd in the Chapel of

HIGHGATE, *Middlesex*:

One on the

GENERAL FAST,

WEDNESDAY, *Dec.* 18, 1745.

The other

On THURSDAY, *Octob.* 9, 1746.

Being the

Day appointed for a GENERAL THANKS-
GIVING to Almighty GOD for the
Suppression of the late Unnatural Rebellion.

By EDWARD YARDLEY, B. D.

Archdeacon of *Cardigan*.

Publish'd

At the Request of the AUDIENCE.

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· R E V. ii. 4, 5.

Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first Love.

Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first Works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy Candlestick out of his Place, except thou repent.

TH E S E Words are part of that Epistle which St. *John* was to send, in the Name of *Christ*, to the Church at *Ephesus*; which was a celebrated City in *Asia Minor*, and the Metropolis of those seven Churches, to which so many Apocalyptical Epistles are directed. For, although the Evangelist was commanded to write to the Bishop or *Angel* of each of these Churches; yet the Contents of these Epistles were not confined to them alone, but regarded the Churches under their Government, and the Congregations of Christians over whom they presided.

These Epistles, I say, literally and primarily concern'd those Churches to which they were respectively sent: but they are, besides, of more extensive use, and may be of great Service to the Church of *Christ* in all Places, and in all Ages; as they contain just Reprehensions, tender Admonitions, and affectionate Exhortations; as they set before us terrible Threats against Impiety and Disobedience, and propose glorious Rewards subsequent to Faith and Holiness. And therefore, at the Conclusion of them, the Holy Spirit proposeth them to our Consideration, saying, ¹ *He that hath an Ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.*

As to this particular Epistle, He who holdeth the ² *Seven Stars* in his *Right-hand*, as an Emblem of his Care and Protection of the *Angels* or Bishops of those Churches; — and who is represented as walking in the *midst* of the *seven Golden Candlesticks*, to shew his Vigilancy over, and paternal Affection to those Churches, and the Power he hath of removing from them the *Candlesticks* when they shall become unworthy of his glorious Light: — He, who is the Lord of all things, the Head of his Church,

¹ Chap. ii. 7, 11, 17, 29. Chap. iii. 6, 13, 22.

² Chap. ii. 1.

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and who by his Omniscience observes all that is done in it, declares to the Church of *Ephesus*,
³ that all her *Works* are *known* to him whether they be good or bad: — that her Labour and Trouble, her Patience and Perseverance are approved by him: — that her dislike of evil Men, and her diligence in discovering and separating from false Teachers, are pleasing to him: — And that he esteems her for labouring for his Name's-sake, and for not fainting and falling back, or betraying the Truth of Religion for fear of Persecution.

These are the Commendations, which our Lord was graciously pleased to bestow on that Church, for those Things in which she had excelled: But if she had since degenerated, and done what deserved Reprehension, she must expect to hear *that* also from the Mouth of Truth. Admonition may lead to Amendment, and Reformation will disarm the Hand of the Avenger: So that it is with the same paternal Affection and kind Concern that our Lord in the next Verse says, ⁴ *Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first Love.* The Object of the Churches Love is the Lord *Jesus*; this the Church of

³ y 2, 3.

⁴ y 4.

Ephesus is not charged with changing or wholly laying aside: She was not turn'd Apostate, but was grown remiss in Affection towards *Christ*; — her Fervour was abated, and Luke-warmness had succeeded into the Place of Zeal; — her Practice of Piety and Virtue became less conspicuous; — and her good Works were grown defective.

^s Hence *Christ* commands the *Ephesians* to be mindful *from whence* they are *fallen*; to compare their present with their former Estate; and, being led by this Reflection, to *repent* and be inwardly grieved that the State of Religion among them is upon the Decline; to resolve and attempt the Recovery of their late praiseworthy Condition; and to do their *first Works* of Devotion and Piety, of Love and Charity.

But as Admonition is too seldom effectual, unless it be back'd with a more powerful Sanction; the Lord and Guardian of the Church, in order to prevail on them to return to their Duty, subjoins the following Threatning, denoting what would speedily befall them, if this gracious Epistle should fail to stir them up to Amendment: — *Or else I will come unto thee quickly,*

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and will remove thy Candlestick out of his Place, except thou repent.

A *Golden Candlestick*, with regard to the Purity of its Substance, and the Brightness and Resplendency of what it contains, may be well set forth as a fit Emblem of the glorious Light of the Gospel, which illuminates the Churches of *Christ*: So that the Removing of this *Candlestick* from the Midst of any *particular* Church, must signify the Removal of God's holy Ordinances and Worship from those who shall render themselves unworthy of them. The Light of the Gospel cannot be extinguish'd: It must burn for ever: But the Benefit of its Warmth, the Glory of its Brightness may be intercepted by the gloomy Cloud of God's Displeasure. As his Church is Catholic, it shall never fail; the Faith and the Truth will always flourish in some Parts of the World: But when any Congregation of Christians abuse the Grace of God, and refuse to make a suitable Return to his Goodness, and to improve the Talents he hath committed to them, those Talents shall be taken away, the Means of Grace shall be denied them, their *Candlestick* shall be *removed out of his Place*, and they left and abandoned to their own wicked Hearts, with-

out the Grace of God, or the Light of the Gospel.

Thus it unhappily fell out with the Church at *Ephesus*; she, as it seems, disregarded the gracious Admonitions of her Lord. His Epistle, sent to her in so tender and condescending a Manner, had not the desired Effect. She never after arrived at the sublime Pitch of her former Affection to her divine Lord. She did not recover that *first* or highest degree of *Love* to *Christ*, which at her original Conversion adorn'd and commended that *Asiatick* Church. Her *first Works* were still omitted, or superficially and negligently perform'd: And thus, it is probable, she fell from one Wickedness to another, until the Long-suffering and Patience of God was worn out; and she being ripe for Vengeance, fell a Sacrifice to the Crimes which were here reprov'd, and to the Punishment herein threatned. Accordingly *Christ* came to her, not clothed with Mildness, but arm'd with Terror; not in Mercy, but in Judgment: He removed her *Candlestick out of its Place*; he deprived her of even the Face of a Church; and took from her not only her spiritual Advantages, but also her temporal Wealth and Dignity. If we enquire into the present State of
this

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this once glorious Church, this once famous and proconsular City, this most celebrated Mart of the *lesser Asia*, we shall find that her ⁶ Riches and Traffick have been long since at an End; instead of a City, nothing but a Village of poor Cottages, and heaps of Ruins can be discovered; and so far is this Place from now having any Church *in* her, that there is not a Christian to be found within some Miles of it; and the whole Territory thereof is now under the slavish and tyrannical Government of *Turks* and *Mahometans*.

Thus we have seen the first Import of the Text, as it regarded the Church of *Ephesus*, for whose sake principally this Epistle was written. To make it useful to ourselves, we must hear what the Spirit saith to *that* Church, and apply it to *our own* Case. We may perhaps, when we consult our Annals, recollect the Time when the Church of *England* abounded in good Words; — when the Reformation of Religion in *this* Land produced a Reformation of Manners; and a Zeal for the Truths of Christianity warm'd the Hearts, and influenced the Lives of the Professors of it: — When

⁶ *Pococke's Observ. on the East*, Vol. ii. Part. ii. p. 46.

Men were arm'd with exemplary Patience, and, having their Hope full of Immortality, despised the Allurements, and disregarded the Terrors of the World; and made it their Choice to suffer the worst of Torments, and the Loss of their Lives, rather than to make Shipwreck of their Faith, and to part with their Religion.

God *knew* and observed their *Works*, and their *Labour*, and their *Patience*: he knew and approved their Virtues, and their Integrity: he, for their Sakes, blessed the Nation with Peace and Prosperity: he continued to us the Purity of our Religion; he fix'd our *Candlestick* on a firm Basis, and supplied it with Light to shine and illuminate all around us.

But, as is usually the Case, Prosperity corrupted our Morals; our Zeal for Religion abated; God had *many Things against* us, and shew'd himself displeased that we had left our *first Love*. He used many Methods to bring us back to our Duty. He permitted our Foes to invade us, and then delivered us from their Violence by his mighty Arm. He suffered our Enemies to lay Plots, and to spread Nets to entrap us; but he disappointed their Designs, and brought their Devices to nought.

As

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As all this would not reclaim this unhappy Nation, he raised up an *intestine* War in our Land, and gave Success to a *Rebellion*, which overturn'd our *Monarchy*, and removed our *Candlestick out of his Place*; depriving us for a Time of those Blessings, which we did not sufficiently prize, nor endeavour to deserve.

When our *Sion* had for some Years sat solitary, and bewailed herself in the Dust; the Almighty was graciously pleased again to turn our Captivity, to re-establish our Government, and to replace our *Candlestick*; in order to try, if the Enjoyment of our civil and religious Liberties, which we had been so long deprived of, would make us shew our Gratitude to the Almighty Power, which had so wonderfully sent us Deliverance. But, alas! that which should have been religious Joy, degenerated into loose Mirth; and, instead of Repentance and Amendment of Life, a Series of Luxury and Debauchery, Vice and Immorality, Atheism and Prophaneness succeeded among us, and overflow'd the Land.

Upon this God's Anger was again stirred up; he sent *Plague* and *Pestilence* amongst us to devour our Strength, and raging *Fire* to consume
our

our Wealth, and to humble the Pride of our great and wicked Metropolis.

When these fore Judgments did not work the Effect which Providence had design'd; God sent us a *King in his Wrath*, who attempted to invade our civil Liberties, and, what was much more to be dreaded, to introduce among us the corrupt Religion of the Church of *Rome*. Whilst we were thus in Danger, we cried unto the Lord, and applied to him for Help and Deliverance: upon which God graciously heard our Prayer, and granted us the Desire of our Hearts: he saved us *for his Name's-sake, that he might make his Power to be known*: he secured to us our Religion and Liberties, and made us once more an happy People.

Happy indeed should we have been, if we had remember'd his Mercies, and turn'd with all our Hearts unto God our Saviour: but we soon *forgat* his *Works*, and the *wonderful* Things which he had done for us: so that we constrain'd him to go on to rule us with the Rod: nevertheless even here in the midst of Judgment he remembred Mercy; and whilst we were engaged in a long and expensive *War*, he frequently gave us Victory over our Enemies, and

at length restored to us the Blessing of *Peace*: and when, by the Permission of Providence, *Rebellion* raised up her detested Head in the midst of us, Almighty Power soon quelled the Monster, and re-establish'd our Tranquillity.

Such were, till of late, our outward Circumstances; Peace abounded, Traffick flourish'd, and Plenty ensued: what they are at present, it will become us seriously to consider; and what Cause can be alledged for so great a Change.

We have seen that God hath been wonderfully good and gracious to *this* Land. He hath shower'd down his Blessings upon us with a liberal Hand: he hath chastised us as his Children in a paternal and very tender Manner. He hath tried all Methods both of Lenity and Severity to engage us in his Obedience. He is still inclined to save us from Sin and Misery; and unwilling to abandon us to Destruction. He shews us in his holy Word the Way to appease his Wrath, and obtain his Favour; and we may imagine him in the Words of my Text addressing himself to this our Nation: *I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first Love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first*

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first Works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy Candlestick out of his Place, except thou repent.

From which Words we are taught to reflect,

I. *First*, on our own Sins: *I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first Love.*

II. *Secondly*, on the Punishment threatned to this Iniquity; *I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy Candlestick out of his Place.*

III. And, *Thirdly*, the Duty enjoined us for avoiding this Judgment; *Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first Works.*

I. *First*, we are herein admonish'd to reflect upon our own Sins: *I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first Love.*

That *first Love* here spoken of, is that strong and sincere Affection with which the primitive Christians embraced *Christ* and his Religion. They loved God above all Things, and were so enamoured with the Beauty of Holiness, and
so

so firmly attach'd to the Gospel of *Christ*, that they suffered nothing to come in Competition with it; they looked upon all worldly Acquisitions as *Dross* and *Dung* in comparison of it; and were willing to resign all Pretensions to Riches and Power, Ease and Pleasure, so that they might win *Christ*: Terrors and Persecutions could not shake their Integrity, for they counted their Lives as nothing, readily laying them down for the Sake of their Master. The Intenseness of their Love for him and his Doctrine, made them careful to regulate their Behaviour according to his Precepts, and had a proper Influence on their Practice; they became burning and shining Lights in the World for their Ardent Devotion towards God, and their Love to Mankind; Religion and Piety, Justice and Charity, unspotted Innocence and Purity, and all kinds of Virtue were conspicuous amongst them; and in this manner they adorn'd the Doctrine of God their Saviour, and recommended it to the World.

But where shall we now find this primitive Simplicity, this genuine Christianity? Can we expect to meet with it where *Iniquity abounds*, and the ⁷ *Love of many is waxed cold*? The

⁷ Matt. xxiv. 12.

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Character of Sin, expressed in the Text by *leaving our first Love*, is with too much Propriety adapted to *our* Age and Nation; where a Zeal for the Service of God, and the Honour of *Christ* is so greatly decayed, and a Regard for Religion and Virtue so much abated: where the *Form of Godliness* is frequently ridiculed and laugh'd at, and the *Power* of it well nigh banish'd from among us.

God hath therefore many Things *against us*, and the Overflowings of Impiety and Immorality have justly provoked his Wrath.

How doth Infidelity flourish and increase? — How are the old Arguments against the Truth of our holy Religion, — those, which many Ages since have been baffled and discountenanced, now again revived and urged, as if they were not void of Strength and Solidity?

How are new Topicks daily devised to gain-say and oppose the infallible and most certain Doctrines of our Faith, to impeach and contradict the Facts of the Gospel, and to shake the Foundation of God, which, in spite of all their vain and impious Efforts, stands sure and immoveable?

How is the Resurrection of our blessed Lord, confirmed by the Evidence of credible Witnesses,

nesses, and asserted by the Holy Spirit of God, endeavoured to be set aside as a Fiction and Imposture; and the main Ground of our holy Religion undermin'd and attempted to be render'd precarious?

How have the rational Grounds of the Christian Faith been attack'd, on an insidious Pretence, that our Religion is not founded on Argument; that our Faith is the Effect of our Education; that we must believe, because the Authority of our Superiors commands us to do so; and that we ought not to search after the Reasonableness of Christianity? As if the Scriptures did not furnish us with sufficient Arguments for the Foundation of a rational Faith? We believe, because unbiaſſed Reason cannot refuse its Assent to the Truths there laid down, nor can reject the Testimony of such Witnesses as are produced in their behalf: and when we are ask'd, we can *give a Reason of the Faith that is in us*: whereas those who oppose it, can, for their so doing, render no Reason but Vice and Obstinacy.

How is every thing that is serious and sacred made the Subject of Scoffing and Boffoonry? How are these Things done, and the Scoffers suffered to go on with Impunity?

B

How

16 A FAST SERMON.

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B

How

How is the *Name* of God daily blasphemed with Oaths and Execrations ; and the Ears of all pious Christians pierced with those impious Speeches which are heard in our Streets ? It is a sure Sign that God is but little thought on, when he is often mentioned without a Cause, and without the least shew of Reverence ; and it is a certain Token that the Nation is ripe for Vengeance, when prophane Wretches are suffered to imprecate God's dreadful Judgments, and at almost every Word to call down the Curse of God on their guilty Heads.

How deplorable a Case is it, that, wherever we go, we meet with such Scenes of Luxury, and so many Instances of Drunkenness ; — that we see human Nature, by the Abuse of intoxicating Liquors, debased to a Level with Brutality ; and our People by this odious and pernicious Practise wasting their Substance, enervating their Strength, prejudicing their Health, weakening their Faculties, and incapacitating themselves for the Performance of the Affairs of Life, and the Duties of their Station ?

What Variety of Methods hath this Age invented for the Destruction of Time and Wealth, — for the Encouragement of Luxury and Pleasure, — to take Mens Minds off from their proper

per Business,—to give them a light turn of Thought,—and to afford them Opportunities of giving a Loose to their Passions and corrupt Inclinations, and of running into all kinds of Debauchery, Vice, and Extravagance? And how have these Places of Entertainment been frequented, these Temples of Pleasure crouded, whilst our Churches, the Temples of the living God, have been almost deserted?

God hath appropriated to himself one Day in seven; but woful Experience shews us how unwilling Men are to allow him even that small Proportion of their Time; whilst, instead of a Day of Devotion, they make it a Day of Business or Diversion, and often employ it in a worse Manner than they do any other Day of the Week.

The Time would fail me, should I attempt to enumerate the many Instances of Pride and Covetousness, of Rapine and Violence, of Theft and Fraud, of Perjury and Injustice, of Adultery and Fornication, and other heinous Crimes which are daily committed without either Shame or Remorse, and have grievously defiled our Land.

Shall not God *punish for these Things?* Will not his Soul be avenged on such a Nation as this?

II. I now come to consider, *Secondly*, the Punishment threatened in the Text to Iniquity; *I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy Candlestick out of his Place.*

The Judgment here denounced is, as I have already observed, the depriving us of the Light of the Gospel, set forth under the Emblem of a *Golden Candlestick*; — the removing from the Midst of us the outward Form of our ecclesiastical Polity, the pure Ordinances of the Church of *Christ*, and the Beauty of our Public Worship; — the letting us be no more a Church, giving us up to diabolical Delusions, and the Corruptions of our own Hearts, permitting us to apostatize from Christianity, and fall into downright Heathenism or Atheism; — or else suffering our Doctrines to be corrupted with the vain Traditions of Men, our Worship to be defiled with superstitious Paganry and Idolatry, and our pure Religion to degenerate into Popery and Anti-christianism.

This is the terrible Judgment, which God threatens us with; and the present unhappy and hazardous Circumstances into which our Sins have brought us, should make us imagine that we hear the Voice of God with Terror declaring the speedy Execution of this Threat,
(unless

(unless we disarm his Fury by Amendment) and saying, *I will come unto thee quickly.* He hath long born with us ; he hath tried all Methods to reclaim us ; still we have continued obdurate, and thwarted the gracious Designs of his Providence ; so that divine Patience must at last be worn out, and Mercy make way for Justice.

The *Judge* now seemeth to *stand at the Door*, ready to try, condemn, and punish this guilty Land ! and a dreadful Punishment it is which hangs over our Heads, and is ready to fall upon us !

Our Religion hath here been happily defended by our civil Government ; the Church and the State being so excellently interwoven, that, whilst one subsists, the other cannot well suffer ; and such is the Nature of our admirable Constitution, that they must both stand and flourish, or sink and fall together. Loyalty is the Mark of the Church of *England*, and the Title of our Monarch is *Defender of the Faith* ; so that whilst the Church prays for and pays true Allegiance to the King, and the King supports the Purity of our Religion, and protects the Rights of the Church ; our Constitution

must remain unviolated, and the People of this Land enjoy their Religion and Liberties.

This the Enemies of our Peace are too well acquainted with, and know that whilst we have a *Protestant* Prince on the Throne, *Popery* can never be establish'd among us: so that their Business is first to attempt the Overthrow of our Government, that they may then with the greater Ease bring in their corrupt Religion.

Thus then the Denunciation in the Text, when applied to ourselves, must be understood in this Latitude, to comprehend the Destruction of our civil Government, and the Ruin of our Church. And, indeed, if we look back to the Punishment inflicted on the *Ephesians* in pursuance of it, we shall find the Effect to be equally large and extensive, and to have reach'd both their religious and civil Rights, to have deprived them both of their *Sceptre* and their *Candlestick*, to have turn'd their Government into Confusion, their Freedom into Slavery, their Wealth and Grandeur into Poverty and Misery, their Politeness into Barbarity, and their Religion into Infidelity.

It is a melancholy, but withal a necessary Task, to take a View of our present Situation, and to look forwards towards those Evils, which

which (unless God in his Goodness avert) we have reason to expect may fall upon us.

We are engaged in a War with two powerful Nations, and consequently we are surrounded with Enemies abroad, who are plotting our Ruin, and with a watchful Eye catch at every Advantage to oppress us. By their Instigation a Rebellion hath been begun, and by their Aid and Assistance is still carrying on in the Bowels of this Kingdom, in behalf of a *popish Pretender* to the Throne.

No one, I am persuaded, is a Stranger to the Miseries which our Country hath undergone already; and every one, from what he hath lately read and heard, must form in his Mind a dreadful Idea of what it hath suffered by this unnatural and impious War.

Our valiant Men have fallen by the Swords of Russians. Our Nobles, our Chiefs, and our brave Soldiers, instead of enjoying Rest and Ease after their late Fatigues in *foreign* Parts, are forced to bear the Inclemencies of the Season, and to be hurried up and down in the Pursuit of a vagabond and lawless Crew of Traitors. The Terror and Consternation of the Inhabitants of the Places thro' which they have passed was so great, that it cannot be described

even by those who felt it; but they can and do relate to us the Damages which they have sustain'd from these Miscreants, in having their Persons abused, their Lives threatned, their Horfes taken away, large Sums of Money violently extorted from them, their Provisions consumed, and their Houses pillaged and defaced.

But all this is as nothing, in comparison of what would follow, if their Treason should take Effect: — if, whilst our Land labours under these Disorders, and our Powers are employ'd to follow a domestic Enemy, it should please God to permit our inveterate Enemies from *abroad* to *invade* our Country, and farther to distress us by pouring in numerous Forces upon us: — if the united Strength of all who are confederated against us should by divine Permission meet with Success; What have we not to fear, when the natural Consequences thereof would be, what I tremble to mention, the Overthrow of our Government, and the Destruction of that Royal House, which hath for many Years ruled over us with Lenity and Justice, and protected us in the Enjoyment of our Rights and Liberties?

What a disadvantageous, what a dreadful Change would it be, instead of a gracious Prince,

Prince, to receive a King from the Hands of *France*, from our natural Enemies? — To receive one who has been long so greatly indebted to them, that it would consume our Wealth to repay his Obligations? — One who has been so well taught and instructed by them in the Arts of *Tyranny*, that it is not to be supposed he would submit to any Limitation of his Authority, or be content with less than *absolute* Power? — Who, consequently, would at one blow destroy our Properties, and deprive us of that Liberty, which we have long made the Subject of our Boasts, as the *Birth-right* of an *Englishman*? — And who, without the Consent of us or our Representatives, would make every thing his own which his Will and Pleasure should prompt him to demand?

The Loss of Liberty hath been esteem'd worse than the Loss of Life: but there is a Loss which still far exceeds even this; and that is the Loss of our Religion, the *Removal* of our *Candlestick*. And what can we expect less in one who hath been nursed up at *Rome* in the Superstitions and Corruptions of that idolatrous Church? He hath been taught that *Hereticks*, as we are there called, are to be *rooted out of the Earth*, that the *Romish* Religion is of Necessity to be propagated

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propagated by all Ways and Methods whatsoever ; and that if fair means will not make Men embrace *that* Faith, Fire and Faggot must be called for, to prevent them from professing or spreading any *other*. If any are so vain as to think, that the *Protestant* Religion can ever flourish under a *Papish* Prince, they must know nothing of the *Romish* Religion, and be but little acquainted with the Histories of their own Nation : and if any should, notwithstanding, pay a Regard to any *Promises* that should be made by a Prince of that Religion, to support the Establishment of the *Protestant* Faith ; there are several flagrant Instances to the contrary, and particularly *two* in *this* Kingdom, which shew, that as the Church of *Rome* lays it down as her Doctrine, *That faith is not to be kept with Hereticks* ; so she requires every Prince in her Communion to break all such Promises, and, for the *greater Glory* of *God*, as they speak, dispenses with all such Obligations, tho' entered into never so solemnly, and bound on their Souls with the most sacred Oaths.

And here I might say much in order to give you a just Notion of the Excellency of our happy Constitution both in Church and State ; and of the Misery which would overwhelm us,
if

if it should be broken through, or overturned : but the Time will not permit me to enlarge farther on this Head ; and, from what has been said, every one must perceive the Weight of that Curse denounced in the Text, *I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy Candlestick out of his Place.*

III. I hasten therefore, *Thirldly* and lastly, to consider the Duty enjoined us for avoiding this Judgment ; *Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first Works.*

1. *First*, we are commanded to *remember from whence we are fallen* ; — to compare our present reprobate and lost Condition with our former ; our present Coldness and Indifference, with the Warmth and Zeal of primitive Christianity ; our present degenerate, impious and immoral Course of Life, with the Piety and Virtue of ancient Times ; that, by collecting the superiour Excellency of that State, we may be induced to attempt the Recovery of it. Vice and Impiety usually proceed from Heedlessness and want of Consideration ; from our being taken with some specious Allurements, and not observing the real Deformity of Vice ; from taking a Distaste at what appears difficult or unpleasant

pleasant in Virtue, and not distinguishing its true Beauty: so that, when the Mist is taken from before our Eyes, and Men can be brought to a serious Consideration, and to view and examine them both in a true Light, they will be regularly led to forsake the Ways of Wickedness, and to follow that which is good and commendable.

2. *Secondly*, after we have *remembered from whence we are fallen*, and have attained a just Notion of our Degeneracy, we cannot but *repent* and endeavour to reclaim. In order to this, we must fix in our Minds a thorough Aversion and Abhorrence for the Sins we have found ourselves guilty of: we must afflict our Souls for having thus offended the Almighty: we must place our Iniquities in that hateful Light which properly belongs to them; and with unfeigned Sorrow and Contrition confess them with all their aggravating Circumstances to Almighty God, and with the greatest Humility and Earnestness implore his Pardon.

When we have done thus, we must take up sincere and hearty Resolutions of forsaking the Crimes which we bewail and confess; and must offer up unto God solemn Vows of Amendment, and be very importunate with him (with-
out

out whom we can do nothing) to bestow on us Grace sufficient to enable us for the future to perform these Resolutions. For without an actual Amendment, the deepest Sighs will not blow away our Guilt, nor the most plentiful Showers of Tears wash out the Stains of our Souls: without an entire Change of Mind, and a real Reformation of Life, all our Sorrow for Sins will be nothing worth, and our confessing of them will be no better than Profaneness and Hypocrisy.

3. *Thirdly*, then, what should follow Repentance and Resolutions of Amendment, but to *do the first Works*?—— Those Works which we did in pursuance to the Laws of God before our Fall from Goodness;—— those Works which the Apostles of our Lord and the Christians of that Golden Age were eminent and conspicuous for;—— those Works, which the Gospel sets forth, and the Writings of the Apostles propose to us as the proper Fruits of Christianity;—— those Works, without which Repentance will always be imperfect, and which alone can turn away the Anger of God, and prevent his Judgments from falling on us.

We should employ ourselves in Works of Piety towards God, in reading his holy Word,
in

in attending on his public Worship, in receiving his holy Sacrament, in offering him the constant Tribute of our private Devotions, and in endeavouring in all Things to promote his Honour and Glory:——in Works of Justice and Equity towards Mankind; in paying to every one those Debts of Honour and Respect, of Service or Obedience which are due unto them; in refraining from Extortion and Oppression, Theft and Robbery, and acting with Openness and Exactness in all our Dealings:——in Works of Charity and Humanity, in relieving those who are in Want, comforting those who are in Sorrow, and doing all the good and kind Things which the Opportunities we meet with, and the Circumstances we are in enable us to perform:——in Works of Temperance, Sobriety, and Chastity, neither consuming the good Creatures of God in Waste and Extravagance, nor abusing our own Bodies in any manner unbecoming the Dignity of our Nature.

Having thus seen the Things which God hath *against us*; the Threatnings which he hath denounced to our Impenitence; and the Means of avoiding his Judgments; I must exhort all who hear me, seriously to lay it to Heart, and to
bring

bring it home to their own Consciences: for, without this, our Abstinence will be of none Effect, and our solemn Prayers and Supplications will be only a most profane Mockery of Heaven.

The heavy Wrath of God now hangs over our Heads, ready to fall upon us. The destroying Angel hath lifted up the Sword, and begun to strike, and many have felt the Weight of his Hand: how far his Commission extends, or where he will be commanded to stop and desist, is a secret known only to God; but this we are certain of, that what is of the utmost Value to us now lies all at Stake; and we know of no way of preventing it being lost for ever, but trying to appease God's Wrath by sincere Repentance and Amendment, and most heartily interceding with God to be merciful to this guilty Land.

It is the Duty of every private Person to join herein for this double Reason, because the Sins of every one, even of the best of us all, are great and many, and when added to the Account do help to augment the Weight of the national Guilt; and because every one would be a Sufferer in the Overthrow of our Constitution, and would in his Religion, his Liberty,
his

his Person, his Relations, or his Estate, fall a Victim to the Rage of our Enemies, and then too late bewail his Wickedness and Insensibility.

How then can any refuse their Assistance towards saving themselves, and all about them, from this terrible Calamity, this imminent Destruction? — How can any now neglect to *pray for the Peace of our Jerusalem?* — Or how can any whose Circumstances are easy, be so wretchedly sordid, as now to withhold their Hands, when their liberal Contributions will in this Time of Danger further her Security? Their Loyalty to their King, and their Love to their Country cannot be sufficiently shewn by their Prayers and their Wishes; they are but pretended if they go no farther. — To raise Men for our Defence, and to support and encourage those Soldiers who venture their Lives for our Religion and Liberties, and who in this rigorous and unkind Season of the Year struggle with Hardships, that we may enjoy ourselves in Peace and Comfort under the Cover of our own Roofs, — is not only a noble and seasonable Act of Charity, but an Act of Patriotism, a Mark that we love our Country, and would endeavour at the Expence of our Wealth to protect

fect it, and to cherish and reward the Defenders of it.

Let us therefore by all proper Methods demonstrate our Zeal and Fidelity to our King and Country: and, above all things, let us shew our Regard for Religion, and the Honour of God. Let every one of us examine into the Plague of his own Heart, and pull out from thence those Vices which corrupt the Soul, deprive us of our Innocence, and provoke the Wrath of Heaven. Let us bewail the Sins of others, and weep and mourn for the Iniquity of our Land. Let us beg of God not to remember our Offences, nor the Offences of our Forefathers, but to spare his People whom he hath redeemed with his most precious Blood, and with that sovereign Balm to heal all our Sores. Let us intreat him to be our mighty Defence and Deliverance, our Shield and Protector; to bless his Majesty King GEORGE with Health, and all kinds of Prosperity; to fight for him against his Enemies, and to crown his Arms with Victory; that so Peace and Plenty may flourish in our Land, and the true Religion be still firmly establish'd among us, through *Jesus Christ* our Lord; to whom, with the Father and Holy Ghost, be ascribed all Honour, Praise, and Adoration, now and for ever. *Amen.*

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

125 of God for the Church of Christ

NOT THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the Chapel of

HIGHGATE, *Middlesex*:

ON THE

Ninth Day of *October* 1746.

Being the Day appointed for a

GENERAL THANKSGIVING

TO

ALMIGHTY GOD,

FOR THE

Suppression of the late Unnatural Rebellion,
and Deliverance of these Kingdoms from
the Calamities of an Intestine War.

COMMON

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2 SAM. xxii. 48, 49, 50.

*It is God that avengeth me, and that bringeth
down the People under me,*

*And that bringeth me forth from mine Enemies :
thou also hast lifted me up on high above them
that rose up against me : thou hast delivered me
from the violent Man.*

*Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord,
among the Heathen, and I will sing praises
unto thy Name.*

THUS it was that the Royal Prophet
exulted in his Success and Prosperity ;
and thus he acknowledged himself in-
debted to the Almighty for all the Blessings
which he enjoy'd. God himself had anointed
him *King* over *Israel*, but was pleased to try
him with various Chances, and to leave him to
struggle with many Difficulties, before his
Kingdom was established in Peace, and he could
repose himself quietly and securely on the

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Throne which Providence had allotted for him and his Posterity.

Saul had been by divine Designation for some time in Possession of the Royalty; but having forfeited the Right by his Disobedience, the Lord had ¹ *rejected him from being King*. However, the evil Spirit from the Lord prompted him, by human Policy and Force, foolishly to attempt to secure the Kingdom to himself, and to persecute and contrive the Destruction of that sacred Person, whom he knew Heaven had appointed to succeed him. He sought to kill him with his ² own hand: — he gave him his own Daughter to Wife, that she might be ³ *a Snare unto him*: — he sent him on a dangerous Expedition against the Enemies of the State, ⁴ *That David might fall by the Hand of the Philistines*. When Providence had covered his Head in the Day of Battle, and crowned him with Victory; the envious and enraged Monarch still sought his Life, and forced him into Banishment, and to seek for shelter amongst the Enemies of *Israel*. Not contented with *this*, he pursued him from Place to Place: but the Vengeance of God at length overtook the aban-

¹ 1 Sam. xv. 23. ² Chap. xviii. ³ 1 Sam. xviii. 21.
⁴ * 25.

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don'd Prince; his Forces were defeated by the *Philistines*, and the Blood of *Saul* and *Jonathan* stained the Mountains of *Gilboa*, and made room for the envied Competitor.

Upon this the House of ⁵ *Judah* made *David* King over *them* in *Hebron*; whilst *Abner* encouraged *Ish-bosheth*, the Son of *Saul*, to aspire to the Crown; who caused *David* much trouble, tho', instead of succeeding, he perished in the Attempt. *David* then, in the eighth Year of his Reign over *Judah*, was, by the free Consent of the *Tribes*, advanced to be King over ⁶ *all Israel*. He was yet to conquer the ⁷ *regal* City, and take *Jerusalem* from the *Jebusites*: even after *this*, he was engaged in Wars with the ⁸ *Moabites*, the *Edomites*, the *Amorites* and the *Syrians*: and no sooner had he gained the Victory over his *foreign* Enemies, than his *own* Family gave him much Disturbance: ⁹ his favourite Son *Absalom* rebelled against him, and obliged him to quit his Capital; but this Attempt ended in the Death of the undutiful and disloyal Conspirator. After this, ¹⁰ *Sheba* conspired against him; and then the ¹¹ *Philistines*

⁵ 2 Sam. ii. ⁶ Chap. v. 3. ⁷ 7 6, 7. ⁸ Chap. viii.
⁹ x. xi. i. xii. 26. ⁹ Chap. xv.—xviii. ¹⁰ Chap. xx.
¹¹ Chap. xxi. 15.

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again became troublesome unto him, so that the *Light of Israel*, the precious Life of God's anointed, had well nigh been ¹ *extinguished* in the Conflict.

Upon Occasion of his several Victories and wonderful Deliverances, he had frequently composed various Hymns of Praise to God, who had been his constant Defender, and the Lifter up of his Head: and now this pious and patient Prince, finding some respite from his Troubles, and seeing himself securely seated on the Throne of his Kingdom, was moved with an holy Zeal and religious Gratitude towards his gracious Benefactor, and dictated that Psalm of Thanks and Praise, out of which my Text is taken; or, as the sacred Historian expresth it, *David spake unto the Lord the Words of this Song, in the Day that the Lord had delivered him out of the Hand of all his Enemies, and out of the Hand of Saul.*

It is beyond my present Business to enter upon a particular Review of this whole sublime Thanksgiving; but the Solemnity of *this Day* properly calls on us to join with the sweet Psalmist of *Israel* in saying, *It is God that avengeth me, and that bringeth down the People under me, and that bringeth me forth from mine*

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Enemies: thou also hast lifted me up on high above them that rose up against me: thou hast delivered me from the violent Man. Therefore I will give Thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the Heathen, and I will sing Praises unto thy Name.

In order therefore to raise our Souls to a proper Pitch for the Celebration of God's Praises on this joyful Occasion, we shall do well distinctly to consider,

- I. *First*, The especial Blessings we have received:
- II. *Secondly*, The Author and Bestower of these Blessings:
- III. And, *Thirdly*, The Return which we are in Duty bound to make for them.

I. *First* then, let us take a View of the especial Blessings we have received: and these are, no less than the wonderful Preservation of our Liberties, our Lives, and our Religion;— the Restoration of Peace at home;— and the Security and Establishment of whatever is most dear and valuable to us.

If we look back to the Time which *preceded* these late unnatural Commotions, we shall perceive that our Situation was so easy and happy, that it will be absurd to think, that any irregular

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lar or violent Measures could possibly mend it. We *sat* every one under our *own Vine*, and our *own Fig-tree* : we enjoy'd our Rights and our Properties: and, when Rapine and Violence disturbed the Peace of Society, and evil-minded Men invaded what belonged to us, we had Laws in Force to declare both the Crime and the Punishment, and Magistrates who bare the Sword in order to inflict the Sentence of the Law. Thus were our Possessions secured, and our Persons protected from Injury. Our Government was mild and equitable, and administered according to those Laws which were made with our own Consent, and are contrived effectually to exclude Tyranny and arbitrary Power.

This was our Condition as to *Temporals*; — and as to the State of our *Religion*, we had not only the free Exercise of it, but it was settled and established among us, and Encouragement given us to serve God according to the Purity of the Gospel, without any superstitious or idolatrous Mixture. The *Word of God* lay open before us in our native Language, and we were permitted and advised to study it, as the only Foundation of our Faith, and the best Director of our Manners. Persecution on pretence of Religion was contrary both to our Opinion and
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our Practice: Liberty was allowed to tender Consciences; and Persuasion was the only Instrument by which we endeavoured with the *Cords of a Man* to draw others over to the established Church.

This was the happy Situation we were in; and this our Happiness we imagined to be fixed on so firm and solid a Foundation, that nothing could overturn it. In the Height of our Security we heard a Rumour, but we ² regarded it not; and, like the Servant of *Elijah*, flightingly said, *Behold, there ariseth a little Cloud out of the Sea, like a Man's Hand!* We had no Suspicion that this small Cloud might spread and enlarge itself, till it covered and darkned our Hemisphere. We heard not the *Sound of abundance of Rain*, and little thought that this Cloud was full of Storm and Tempest to disturb our quiet. We disregarded the *Day of small Things*; and believed not, until these Kingdoms were filled with an armed Multitude of enraged and blood-thirsty Rebels, who attempted to unhinge our excellent Constitution, to overturn our Government, and destroy our Church; in order to set up an arbitrary Power instead of a legal Administration, and an idolatrous and superstitious

² 1 King xviii. 44.

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Worship, instead of the Exercise of the pure Protestant Religion.

We cannot be truly sensible of our Deliverance, unless we cast our Eyes back on the imminent Danger we were in;—when the Lives and the Properties of ourselves, our Friends, and our Relations, when our Religion itself, and every thing that was most dear to us were at Stake;—unless we reflect seriously on the melancholy Thoughts which some Months ago overwhelm'd us, when the Seat of Sovereignty shook;—when our *Candlestick* tottered, and seemed ready to be *removed* out of its *Place*;—when our Hearts *trembled for the Ark of God*;—when Popery and Tyranny attack'd us with a high Hand, and we were not in a Condition to defend ourselves against them;—when great Part of our Land was covered with an armed hostile Force, and the rebellious Natives were assisted with Succours from abroad in the vile, ungrateful, and unnatural Parricide of destroying the Country which brought them forth.

How did our Fears prevail over us daily more and more, as their Powers became stronger, their Numbers increased, and their Rage grew more boisterous? How were we distracted between

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tween Grief and Terror, when we heard that Multitudes had felt the Weight of their barbarous Fury,—that our strong Holds had surrendered themselves into their Hands,—that the Lives of many Loyal Subjects had been sacrificed in the Defence of our Country; and that our Fields were made wet with the Blood of the Slain:—when we found them approaching towards the Heart of this Kingdom, and continually expected their making a farther Progress, and too fatally drawing near us and our Metropolis? But, in the midst of this their apparent Success, a Panick seized on them; their Courage deserted them; they turned their Backs on the Royal Forces; they fled before their Pursuers, and were at length overtaken and defeated by the *Royal Hero*, whose Courage, Conduct, and military Virtues it would be criminal on *this* joyful Occasion to pass by unregarded.

After this happy Turn of Affairs, Success continually declared for us, and the Rebel Cause gradually declined, till at length the Traytors had nothing left but despair,—no Choice, but whether they should immediately surrender themselves to their Conquerors, or flee to their Rocks and their Mountains, and there screen themselves for a short Time, and defer their
deserved

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deserved Punishment, until the Vengeance of an enraged Sovereign should find them out.

From hence we date the Restoration of our Happiness: for this we now rejoice, that we are again re-instated in the same desirable Condition from which we were in Danger of falling. Our domestic Enemies are subdued, our Religion preserved, our Government fixed upon a firmer Basis, our Peace at home restored, and our Land regaining its former flourishing Aspect.

These then are the especial Blessings we have received and at present commemorate; and it therefore becomes our Duty to consider,

II. *Secondly*, The Author and Bestower of these Blessings. And here we shall find the Truth of what is asserted in my Text; ³ *It is God that avengeth me, and that bringeth down the People under me,* ⁴ *and that bringeth me forth from mine Enemies: thou also hast lifted me up on high above them that rose up against me: thou hast delivered me from the violent Man.*

In a general View, every Benefit or Advantage which we do or can enjoy, comes from God, who created the World, and preserves and governs it;—who disposes the Affairs of it

³ y 48.

⁴ y 49.

according

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according to his good Pleasure, and by his Providence over-rules all natural Causes, and directs all human Actions, giving Success to some, and defeating others of their Aim.

The Fate of People and Nations, of Kings and their Kingdoms is in his Hands. He *increaseth the Nations, and straitneth them again*: he *ruleth in the Kingdom of Men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will*. He commandeth the Elements, and they obey him: he *stilleth the Raging of the Sea, and the Madness of the People*. In vain is either Strength or Policy, when employ'd against the Scheme of Providence; and the most valued Qualifications become of no use, unless Heaven prosper us when we go about to exert them. *The Race is not always to the Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong*; nor can the firmest Battallions, the swiftest Squadrons, or the most copious Armies, when they rely upon their own Courage, Conduct, or Policy, assure themselves of Success or Victory. Many Chances there are, many Accidents in the Course of War, which human Foresight can never discover, and which may, nevertheless, render the most plausible and well-contrived Plan ineffectual: and these Circumstances are in the Disposal of Providence, who may by the ordering
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ing of them defeat the most artful Stratagems, and render the greatest Force, and the most redoubted Valour of no more effect than Timidity and Impotence.

We may be fully satisfied in this either from sacred or profane History; in both which we are furnished with many Instances, where, by some unforeseen and unexpected Accident, strong and numerous Armies have been deprived of the Victory; and the smaller Number, who before the Engagement were perhaps despicable to their Enemies, have kept the Field as Conquerors. None but an Atheist can impute this to meer Chance; whilst all, who own a superior Being, must needs conclude, that such was the Will of God, who disposed all the several Occurrences towards that End which he had before ordained.

If Providence kindly interferes in things of the *smallest* Moment:— if a *Sparrow* doth not *fall to the Ground*, or a *Hair* fall from our Head, contrary to the Will of God; surely the Disposal of Crowns and Kingdoms, and the Battles on which those attend as Rewards, (Cases in which the Happiness of thousands are deeply concerned) must be worthy of the Divine Attention, and fit Objects of his Care: and therefore

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fore we may well assert, that it is *God who giveth Victory in Battle*, and that the Success of War dependeth wholly on him.

Hence then let us learn to abate of our Pride, and not to place our Confidence in our Skill, our Strength, or our Numbers; since, *'unless the Lord keep the City, the Watchman waketh but in vain*:—unless the Lord fight for us, we can have no reasonable Hopes of Success. Let us learn to place our whole Trust in God alone; but this must not hinder us from doing all we can in our Defence; only, when we have made the best Preparation to oppose our Enemies, we are then to look up to God for Success, to beg that he would prosper our Endeavours, and to recommend ourselves to his Favour by Sorrow for our Transgressions and Resolutions of Amendment: and if, after this, he shall bless us with Victory, (as he hath *lately* been graciously pleased to do) we must acknowledge him to be our only Saviour and Deliverer, and that *it is of the Lord's Mercy that we are not consumed*. Whatever Commendations we deservedly bestow on those who commanded our Armies, or fought our Battles for us, — who directed with Discretion, or combated with

¹ Psal. cxxvii. 2.

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Courage ; still the Glory of all belongs to God, who inspired them with Wisdom and Prudence,—who animated them with undaunted Valour,—who taught *their Hands to War, and their Fingers to fight*,—who covered their Heads in the Day of Battle,—who gave each Ball a Commission whom it should annoy ;—who turned the Counsels of their Enemies into Foolishness, disheartened their Forces, and made them turn their Backs upon their Conquerors. When we thus apply the *general* Doctrine to our own *particular* Case, we cannot but acknowledge that *God hath done great Things for us whereof we rejoice* ; and that it is he who hath trodden down our Enemies, who hath *lifted us up on high above them that rose up against us*, and hath *delivered us from the violent Man*.

We may all of us plainly enough distinguish the Finger of God in almost *every* Step of the late Disorders. By the Permission of the most High, for the Punishment of our Wickedness, a Handful of Rebels suddenly grew up into a dreaded Multitude, and defeated our Troops at the first Onset : but the same good Being prevented their making the *best* of their Victory ; and, in Compassion to us, infatuated our Enemies, and with-held them from proceeding forwards

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forwards, and flying to the Spoil, at a Time when this Kingdom was naked and defenceless, and nothing, in all human Probability, could have stopped their Progress, or have resisted their Power. But instead of this, they loitered at a Distance, and gave us leisure to gather Forces to oppose them. When we were prepared for their Reception, they marched as it were to meet us: but here again Providence interfered; God looked down from Heaven, and discomfited them, — he sent Faintness into their Hearts, — he put his *Hook* in their *Nose*, and his *Bridle* in their *Lips*, and led them *back by the Way by which they came*.

But then it was fit we should have *another* Check, lest we should pride ourselves in our Advantages, and should say, our own Hand, and our own Arm had wrought our Deliverance. God therefore suffered us to engage without Success, and to retreat from those whom we had before chased back. However, his Mercy still attended on us; and at length, in his good Time, when our Foes were raised to the highest Pitch of Assurance, and seemed certain of Victory, he, who holds in his Hands the Balance of the World, and weighs the Fate of Kingdoms, was graciously pleased to declare for us, and to

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enable us to give our Enemies a total Overthrow.

I shall enter into no farther detail of these Affairs, which would not so properly come from this Place; but shall beg of you at your Leisure to reflect on the many remarkable Incidents which have happened during those intestine Broils; and I am well assured, that the more you think of them, you will be the more fully convinced, that God is the Author and Bestower of the Blessings which we now commemorate. And this brings me,

III. In the *Third*, and last Place, to consider the Return which we are bound in Duty to make for them; which the Psalmist thus expresses, *Therefore I will give Thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the Heathen, and I will sing Praises unto thy Name.*

When Man receives any Favour from his Fellow-creature, he cannot be excused from Returns of Thanks, without being stigmatized for his Ingratitude: how much more will the supreme Being, the Maker of Heaven and Earth merit *all* our Thanks and our Praise, for looking down from the Throne of his Glory upon

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upon us sinful Men, and conferring Benefits on us Worms of the Earth? *Lord, what is Man, that thou art mindful of him; or the Sons of Men, that thou regardest them?* God hath no Motive to induce him to do this, but his own intrinsic Goodness: it is *this* which moved him first to create Man upon the Earth; and it is *this* which makes him continually supply him with what is necessary and convenient for him, and watch over him for good. The *constant* Mercies then, which every one of us do every Hour receive, demand from us continual and unfeigned Thanks: but when, besides these, God shall at any Time bestow on us *especial* Blessings, such abundant Goodness should stir us up to an higher Degree of Gratitude, to *sing unto the Lord a new Song* in a more exalted Strain, and to take all the most proper Methods of shewing ourselves truly thankful.

When we are fully convinced in our Minds, that it was the Hand of God, and not the Arm of Flesh, which hath brought about our Deliverance, our Souls surely can never be so sluggish and stupid as not to meditate on God's Goodness, and admire and adore the Wonders of his Providence; our Hearts must needs be enlarged, and our Mouths filled with his Praise.

The

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The Joy which we conceive on such Occasions, will swell too high to be confined to the Heart, or pent up in the Closet. It will break out into grateful Acknowledgments, and seek to vent itself by talking of God's *Salvation Day by Day*. It will persuade us, that *public* Blessings demand *public* Acknowledgments, and will direct our Feet to the House of God, where his Praises may be set forth with greater Solemnity,—where an holy Emulation may increase our Thankfulness,—where we may encourage each other in giving Praise unto God, and say, ^a *O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his Name together*; let us glory in his Excellencies, let us venerate his Power, let us think with Admiration on his Wisdom, let us celebrate his Mercy, let us adore and worship his Majesty, and devote ourselves entirely to his Honour and Service.

For if we praise God only with our *Lips*, whilst our *Hearts* are alienated from him; such unprofitable Sacrifice will be rejected by him, and our Thanksgiving will degenerate into Hypocrisy.

The thankful Heart of a true Christian will cause him to reflect with Concern, for having

^a Psal. xxxiv. 3.

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ever disobliged his great Benefactor ; and will make him sensible, that the Afflictions he hath been in proceeded from God's Anger against Sin ; —that when he withdraws the Rod, he doth it in order to encourage us in our Repentance and Amendment ; —and that it is the Height of Ingratitude and Folly to persist in running counter to his Commands, who is so good and gracious to us.

God hath graciously delivered us from domestic Enemies ; but we are *still* engaged in a foreign War with two potent Nations ; it depends upon God to determine on *which* side Success shall fall : and how can we expect his Favour for the future, if, like a foolish and unwise People, we requite his former Mercies with Disobedience ?

In the midst of all our Troubles, it hath pleased God for some Years past to give us plentiful Harvests, and to fill our Granaries with Corn, so that we were able to furnish the extraordinary Demands we have had for it without any exorbitant Expence : but then his Hand hath lain heavy upon us in the Destruction of our *Cattle* ; the Contagion yet, notwithstanding all our Care, rages and spreads ; and God only knows how far it will reach, or when it will stop.

Shall

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Shall we not therefore, when we consider all this, take up the Words of *Exra*, ³ *After all that is come upon us for our evil Deeds, and for our great Trespasse, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our Iniquities deserve, and hast given us such Deliverance as this, which we now commemorate: + Should we again break thy Commandments, wouldest not thou be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping?*

God hath it in his Power either to look on us with Favour and Compassion, or to turn away his Face from us, and to suffer Calamities of various Kinds to oppress us. It will therefore certainly be our greatest Wisdom to appease the *Remains* of God's Wrath by a speedy and effectual Repentance; and to add Vows of Obedience to our Sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiving; that we may thus engage the great Governour of the World *still* to be our God,—to continue his Mercy towards us,—to assist us in *all* our Troubles,—to fight our Battles against our Enemies,—to give us Plenty and Peace,—to preserve our Flocks and our Herds, to cure the Distemper which at present destroys them, and to suffer *not* our Cattle to decrease,—but to

³ Ezr. ix. 13.

⁴ y 14.

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make us in all Things a happy People, and to crown us with all Kinds of Blessings.

Let it not be thought, that the Mention of some *less favourable* Circumstances in which we are involved, do improperly sully the Joy of this glorious Day: but rather, that Reflection on them and on the Duties which they oblige us to, are the fittest Foundation for the Thanks which we are now to offer up; and that this Method is well adapted to draw down farther Blessings from Heaven, and so to afford us *more* Occasions of lauding and praising God.

I might mention other Duties, which ought to accompany religious Joy, such as that of shewing an universal Benevolence to Mankind, being kind and affectionate to others as God hath been merciful to us, and being tender and compassionate, generous and charitable to the Poor. But I shall wave insisting upon this, in order to Name some especial Duties, which the Occasion of our present Joy should particularly remind us of.

If we are glad and rejoice that we are delivered from the Dread of a *tyrannical* and *absolute* Power, superior to our Laws, and destructive of them, supported by and subordinate to a foreign Prince: let us from hence remem-

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ber that it is our Duty to pay a cheerful Obedience to those *Laws* which are preserved to us ; and to yield a willing and ready Submission to our gracious Sovereign, who governs us according to the Directions of them. Let no Murmurs or Discontents arise in our Minds : let no Fears or Jealousies obstruct our Duty, or lessen our Loyalty : let the sacred Obligations we are under prevail on us to be loyal and peaceable, and to do all that we can, according to the Station which each of us fills, to promote the Quiet and Welfare of the Nation.

If we are truly thankful for having our *Religion* secured to us, for being freed from the Danger of having *Popery* settled among us, and our Consciences forced under pain of Fire and Faggot to believe what is contrary to Reason, or hypocritically to profess what we can by no Means bring ourselves to believe : — if we are really and heartily glad that we are under no Necessity of paying Adoration to a Piece of Bread, of bowing to Stocks and Stones, of praying to Saints and Angels, and of admitting other Mediators between God and Man, besides the Man *Christ Jesus* : if these Things give us a real Pleasure, we should shew it in entertaining a high Regard for the *Protestant* Faith, the

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true Christian Religion, which is happily preserved and established amongst us; — in complying with all its Precepts, in believing all its Doctrines, in conforming to its Worship, and demonstrating ourselves to be sincere and hearty *Protestants*, or, which in other Words is the same, to be good Christians.

When therefore we have vowed a grateful Obedience to the God of our Salvation, and are determined with his gracious Assistance to perform those Duties which our present Situation requires of us; *then* it is that his Praise will become our Mouths; when we are ⁵ *righteous*, or determine to be so, we may with propriety *rejoice in the Lord, for Praise is comely for the Upright.*

Let us then comply with the Injunctions of our Superiors, and give way to the grateful Motions of our own Souls, in setting forth the Praises of that God who hath delivered us. ⁶ *O, sing unto the Lord a new Song, for he hath done marvellous Things: his Right-hand and his holy Arm hath gotten him the Victory.* ⁷ *He hath redeemed our Lives from Destruction; he hath crowned us with loving Kindness and tender Mercies.* ⁸ *Our Eye hath seen our Desire on our Enemies, and our*

⁵ Psal. xxxiii. 1.

⁶ Psal. xcvi. 1.

⁷ Psal. ciii. 4.

⁸ Psal. xcii. 11.

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Ears have heard our Desire of the Wicked that rose up against us. ¹ This is the Lord's doing, it is marvellous in our Eyes. ² Therefore will we sing of the Mercies of the Lord for ever; with our Mouths will we make known his Faithfulness to all Generations: ³ for he is the Glory of our Strength, and in his Favour our Horn shall be exalted. And as we have no hope elsewhere, and all our Confidence is fixed on God alone; to our *Praises* let us add our fervent *Prayers* for the Prosperity of this our Church and Nation; that it would please the Almighty to pour all Manner of Blessings on the sacred Head of his Anointed; to give such Success to his Arms abroad, as may produce a safe, honourable, and general Peace; to confirm the Fidelity of those loyal Subjects who are attach'd to his Government; to turn the Hearts of the discontented; to banish from among us domestic Troubles and Dissensions; and, above all, to preserve his Church from all Heresy and Schism, and from every Attempt to undermine or overturn it: and may the good God accept our Praises, and grant these our Prayers, through the alone Merits and Mediation of *Jesus Christ* our Lord; to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed all Thanks, Praise and Adoration now and for ever. *Amen.*

¹ Psal. cxviii. 23.

² Psal. lxxxix. 9.

³ y 17.

